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Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives

Situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 61/174, in which, for the first time, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to the Assembly at its sixty-second session on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The report outlines activities undertaken by the United Nations, in particular the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, to promote and protect human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The report also contains information submitted to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights by other United Nations agencies concerning the human rights of refugees, the right to food, the rights of the child, freedom of thought, expression and equal access to information in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Both the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights have expressed their serious and deep concern at continuing reports of systemic, widespread and grave violations of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Commission established the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in resolution 2004/13. The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has not accepted the mandate of the Special Rapporteur and has not extended any cooperation or assistance to him in the discharge of his mandate.

* A/62/150.

** This report was submitted after the deadline so as to include the most recent developments.

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During the course of his mandate, the Special Rapporteur was not authorized to visit the country to establish direct contact with the Government and with the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. While he has not been granted access to the country, the Special Rapporteur has continued to carry out his mandate to the best of his ability and to collect and receive credible and reliable information from relevant actors, including Governments, non-governmental organizations and any other parties that have knowledge of the situation.

The General Assembly, the Commission on Human Rights and the Human Rights Council have requested the High Commissioner for Human Rights to engage in a comprehensive dialogue with the authorities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with a view to establishing technical cooperation programmes in the field of human rights, and to submit her findings and recommendations to the Commission and, subsequently, to the Council. In December 2006, the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations Office at Geneva informed the High Commissioner that his Government does not recognize the resolution adopted by the Commission on Human Rights on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and was therefore unable to accept the High Commissioner's offer to engage in technical cooperation activities. No further communication has been received from the Government on this matter. The High Commissioner and her Office will continue their efforts to engage in a constructive dialogue with the authorities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with a view to promoting and protecting human rights in the country.

The Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances has transmitted nine cases to the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, all of which remain outstanding. The Working Group hopes that the Government will take steps to clarify the outstanding cases.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Government has reported to the respective monitoring bodies established under those treaties.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 61/174, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General, for the first time, to submit a report to the Assembly at its sixty-second session on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the sixty-first session of the General Assembly resolutely opposed and rejected the adoption of resolution 61/174.[1]

2. The Commission on Human Rights, in its resolution 2005/11,[2] urged other United Nations bodies, in particular the General Assembly, to take up the question of the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea if the Government does not extend cooperation to the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and if improvement of the situation of human rights in the country is not observed. The General Assembly subsequently adopted resolutions 60/173 and 61/174 on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

3. In resolution 61/174 the Assembly expressed its very serious concern at continuing reports of systemic, widespread and grave violations of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including:

(a) Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, public executions, extrajudicial and arbitrary detention, the absence of due process and the rule of law, the imposition of the death penalty for political reasons, the existence of a large number of prison camps and the extensive use of forced labour;

(b) The situation of refugees expelled or returned to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and sanctions imposed on citizens of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea who have been repatriated from abroad, such as treating their departure as treason, leading to punishments of internment, torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or the death penalty, and urged all States to ensure respect for the fundamental principle of non-refoulement;

(c) All-pervasive and severe restrictions on the freedoms of thought, conscience, religion, opinion and expression, peaceful assembly and association and on equal access to information and limitations imposed on every person who wishes to move freely within the country and travel abroad;

(d) Continuing violation of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of women, in particular the trafficking of women for the purpose of prostitution or forced marriage, forced abortions, and infanticide of children of repatriated mothers, including in police detention centres and camps;

(e) Unresolved questions of international concern relating to the abduction of foreigners in the form of enforced disappearance, which violates the human rights of nationals of other sovereign countries;

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[1] See the statement made on 9 November 2006 by the Deputy Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations at the forty-third meeting of the Third Committee of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session (A/C.3/61/SR.43, paras. 23-25).

[2] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2005, Supplement No. 23* and corrigenda (E/2005/23 and Corr.1 and 2), chap. II, sect. A.

(f) The violations of economic, social and cultural rights, which have led to severe malnutrition and hardship for the population in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea;

(g) Continuing reports of violations of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of persons with disabilities, especially on the use of collective camps and of coercive measures that target the rights of persons with disabilities to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children.

4. The Assembly also expressed its strong concern that the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had not engaged in technical cooperation activities with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and her Office, despite efforts by the High Commissioner to engage in a dialogue with the authorities in this regard.

5. The Assembly furthermore expressed its very deep concern over the precarious humanitarian situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, compounded by the mismanagement on the part of the authorities, in particular the prevalence of infant malnutrition, which, despite recent progress, continued to affect the physical and mental development of a significant proportion of children, and urged the Government to facilitate the continued presence of humanitarian organizations to ensure that humanitarian assistance was delivered impartially to all parts of the country on the basis of need in accordance with humanitarian principles.

6. The Assembly strongly urged the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to respect fully all human rights and fundamental freedoms and, in this regard, to implement fully the measures set out in previous resolutions of the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights, and the recommendations addressed to the Government by the United Nations special procedures and treaty bodies, and to extend its full cooperation to the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including by granting him and other United Nations human rights mechanisms full, free and unimpeded access to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

II. Cooperation with international human rights mechanisms

A. Treaty bodies

7. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a party to four of the seven core international human rights treaties: the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The ratification of these four international treaties offers a solid basis for the promotion and protection of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

8. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has submitted its second periodic report concerning the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (E/1990/6/Add.35), its initial report concerning the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW/C/PRK/1) (the second periodic report has been overdue since March 2006), its second periodic report on the implementation

of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC/C/65/Add.24) and its second periodic report on the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR/C/PRK/2000/2) (the third periodic report has been overdue since January 2004). In examining these reports, the respective committees noted a number of concerns within the areas of their mandates and which were expressed in the conclusions and recommendations for improvements that they addressed to the Government (conclusions and recommendations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, document E/C.12/1/Add.95; concluding comments of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW/C/PRK/CO/1); concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, document CRC/C/15/Add.239; concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee, document CCPR/CO/72/PRK).

9. The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea invited the Committee on the Rights of the Child to visit the country in 2004. A two-member delegation of the Committee, accompanied by the Secretary of the Committee, visited the country in April 2004 prior to the presentation of the State party's second periodic report to the Committee at its thirty-sixth session. The delegation had the opportunity to discuss the situation of children's rights with several key Government officials and foreigners working in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including staff members of the United Nations Country Team, the diplomatic community and international non-governmental organizations. The delegation was able to visit a large number of institutions relating to children in Pyongyang and South Phyongan Province.

B. Special procedures

10. The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has not issued a standing invitation to the special procedures of the Commission on Human Rights/ Human Rights Council and did not accept requests by the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, the Special Rapporteur on the right to food and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to visit the country.

11. A number of special procedures, including the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of punishment, the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, the Special Rapporteur on the right to food and the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention have sent written communications to the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea drawing attention to information received concerning human rights violations in the country. The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea replied to the greater part of the written

communications sent by special procedures since the adoption of Commission on Human Rights resolution 2003/10[3] by rejecting the content of the letter.

1. Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

12. The mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was established by the Commission on Human Rights in its resolution 2004/13[4] and extended in resolution 2005/11. In its decision 1/102,[5] the Human Rights Council decided to extend all mandates and mechanisms transferred to it by the Commission on Human Rights pursuant to resolution 60/251 of the General Assembly. In decision 5/101,[6] the Council decided to extend the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea until the date on which it will be considered by the Council according to the programme of work. The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the fifth session of the Council "categorically and resolutely" rejected the extension of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur (see A/HRC/5/G/11).

13. According to Commission on Human Rights resolution 2004/13, the Special Rapporteur is mandated to establish direct contact with the Government and with the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including through visits to the country, and to investigate and report on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and on the Government's compliance with its obligations under international human rights instruments. The Special Rapporteur is also mandated to seek and receive credible and reliable information, including through visits to the country, from all relevant actors, including Governments, non-governmental organizations and any other parties who have knowledge of the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

14. The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has not accepted the mandate of the Special Rapporteur, arguing that the resolution establishing the mandate "represents an extreme manifestation of politicization, selectivity and double standards" (see A/HRC/5/G/5),[7] and has not extended any cooperation to the Special Rapporteur. The Special Rapporteur has tried to engage with the Government on various occasions; however, the authorities have consistently denied his requests to visit the country, resolutely and categorically rejecting the resolution establishing the mandate of the Special Rapporteur and reminding the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights that "the request of the Special Rapporteur for a visit is completely impossible to be met at all".[8] The Special Rapporteur has continued to fulfil his mandate to the best of his ability

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[3] Ibid., *2003, Supplement No. 23* (E/2003/23), chap. II, sect. A.

[4] Ibid., *2004, Supplement No. 23* (E/2004/23), chap. II, sect. A.

[5] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-first Session, Supplement No. 53* (A/61/53), chap. II, sect. B.

[6] See A/HRC/5/21, chap. I, sect. B.

[7] See also the statements by the Observer for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at the sixty-first session of the Commission on Human Rights (E/CN.4/2005/SR.50) and at the fourth session of the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/4/SR.20).

[8] Letter dated 3 October 2005 from the Permanent Mission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations Office in Geneva addressed to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

based on information collected from other Governments and a variety of other sources.

15. In view of the fact that the Special Rapporteur continued to be prevented from visiting the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, he visited neighbouring countries where he received the support of Governments, members of civil society and United Nations agencies. In December 2006, as a follow-up to his visits to these countries in 2005, the Special Rapporteur visited Japan (10-14 December 2006), Mongolia (18-23 December 2006) and the Republic of Korea (14-18 December 2006) to gather information on the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and to examine the consequences and impact of the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on these countries. One of the most important issues raised during his various country visits was the fate of those abducted by agents of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and those fleeing from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

16. The Special Rapporteur presented his last report to the General Assembly (A/61/349) on 20 October 2006 and to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/4/15) on 22 March 2007. In the latter report, the Special Rapporteur analysed the information related to a number of key human rights violations, in particular rights pertaining to food, security of the person, humane treatment and justice; refugees/those seeking refuge; specific groups, in particular women and children; and the responsibility of the State authorities to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms and related accountability. The Special Rapporteur will submit a separate report to the General Assembly at its present session.

2. Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances

17. As stated in its latest report to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/4/41), the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances has transmitted a total of nine cases to the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which the Working Group considers to be still outstanding. In addition to eight cases of disappeared Japanese nationals abducted in the 1970s and 1980s, a further case of the disappearance of a female national of the Republic of Korea on the border between China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was reported to have occurred in 2004.

18. The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea transmitted a communication to the Working Group on 24 May 2006 in which it replied concerning all nine outstanding cases. As reported by the Working Group (ibid., para. 153), the Government stated that with regard to the eight cases of Japanese nationals, it had already provided the Government of Japan with detailed information on those persons. With regard to the other outstanding case, the Government stated that it had undertaken an investigation into the case and that neither that incident nor any similar act had occurred in the border area.

19. In a further communication to the Working Group dated 12 September 2006, the Government reported that in a recent press interview the husband of one of the Japanese abductees had confirmed that his wife was dead (ibid., para. 154).

20. In respect of the nine outstanding cases, the Working Group is unable to report on the fate or whereabouts of the disappeared persons. The Working Group hopes

that the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will take steps to clarify the outstanding cases.

III. Role of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in assisting the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the promotion and protection of human rights

Technical cooperation

21. In its resolutions 2003/10 and 2004/13 the Commission on Human Rights requested the High Commissioner for Human Rights to engage in a comprehensive dialogue with the authorities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with a view to establishing technical cooperation programmes in the field of human rights and to submit her findings and recommendations to the Commission at its sixtieth and sixty-first sessions, respectively. In resolution 2005/11 the Commission requested the High Commissioner to continue her efforts to engage in a comprehensive dialogue with the authorities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on the same matter. In its decision 2/102,[9] the Human Rights Council requested the High Commissioner for Human Rights to continue with the fulfilment of her activities, in accordance with all previous decisions adopted by the Commission on Human Rights and to update the relevant reports and studies.

22. In line with standard policy and practice developed pursuant to General Assembly resolution 926 (X) of 14 December 1955, which established the United Nations programme of advisory services and technical cooperation in the field of human rights, various forms of assistance in the area of human rights are at the disposal of Member States upon their request.

23. On 8 August 2003, with a view to exploring ways of initiating technical cooperation between the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the then Acting High Commissioner addressed a letter to the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations Office at Geneva, inviting him to engage in a dialogue regarding technical cooperation matters. On 24 August 2004, 28 November 2005 and 6 December 2006, both the Acting High Commissioner and the High Commissioner met with the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations Office at Geneva.

24. During these meetings, the Acting High Commissioner and the High Commissioner raised the possibility of exploring ways of engaging in technical cooperation activities and made several proposals for technical cooperation, such as activities in the area of human rights treaty implementation.

25. In the meeting on 24 August 2004, the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea stated that he had taken note of the proposal, which would be forwarded to Pyongyang for the Government's consideration. In the meetings held on 28 November 2005 and 6 December 2006, the Permanent Representative stated that his Government did not recognize the

[9] See A/HRC/2/9, chap. I, sect. B.

resolution adopted by the Commission on Human Rights on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and was therefore unable to accept the High Commissioner's offer. The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea argued that "under current circumstances in which the technical cooperation is being abused as a means of pressure to enforce the implementation of the resolution, the [Democratic People's Republic of Korea] has been left with no option" but not to agree to it.[10] The Permanent Representative nonetheless stated that he had taken note of the High Commissioner's willingness to offer technical assistance. No further communication has been received from the Government on this matter to date.

26. Notes have consequently been submitted by the secretariats of the Commission on Human Rights and the Human Rights Council pursuant to Commission resolutions 2003/10 (E/CN.4/2004/31), 2004/13 (E/CN.4/2005/32) and 2005/11 (E/CN.4/2006/32) and Council decision 2/102 (A/HRC/4/60) to transmit the findings and recommendations of the Acting High Commissioner and the High Commissioner, respectively, to the Commission and the Council.

27. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights provides to special procedures, in particular the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, personnel and logistical and research assistance to support them in the discharge of their mandates.

IV. Assistance for the promotion and protection of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea extended by the United Nations system

28. In a letter dated 15 May 2007, the High Commissioner for Human Rights invited United Nations bodies to submit to her Office relevant information on the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights subsequently received relevant information from the following United Nations entities: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); World Food Programme (WFP); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

A. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

29. UNHCR stated that a constant flow of nationals of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continue to leave the country, seeking protection, assistance and/or settlement elsewhere. A number of concerns stem from these movements, such as reports of severe curtailing of the right to freedom of movement, including the right to leave the country; increased risks of smuggling and of trafficking in

[10] Letter dated 28 February 2005 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

human beings, in particular women for the purposes of prostitution and/or forced marriages; violation of the fundamental principle of non-refoulement by countries of transit; reports of severe punishment in case of forced return to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea; restrictive policies applied by countries of transit, in particular, arrest and detention; no access to basic social and economic rights, no access to legal stay and related documentation (even for long-stayers) and prolonged exit procedures that severely impact the well-being of nationals of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea awaiting settlement in third countries. Unaccompanied women and children are particularly affected by these issues. UNHCR warned that, should the situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea deteriorate and these movements increase, the countries of transit with limited capacity could have difficulty in coping.

B. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

30. FAO reports[11] that the aggregate 2006 cereal output was estimated at some 4 million tons (including rice in milled terms), some 2.6 per cent less than the good crop of 2005 but still 14 per cent above the average of the past five years. With a steady recovery in agricultural production over the past few years, the cereal import requirement has been almost halved since the start of the decade. Given the relatively high level of production again in 2006, the cereal deficit for the 2006/07 marketing year (November/October) is estimated to remain just under 1 million tons, the second lowest in the past seven years. If the estimated level of imports materializes, the per capita cereal consumption in the country would remain at some 160 kg, close to the status quo. For the period November 2006 to April 2007, the Government commercially imported 40,000 tons of grains and received another 900 tons as food aid. The Republic of Korea has also pledged 400,000 tons of rice under an agreement reached at the thirteenth meeting of the North-South Committee for the Promotion of Economic Cooperation in April 2007. However, even if these commitments are fulfilled, there would remain a deficit of 510,000 tons in the current marketing year, which needs to be covered by additional commercial imports and/or food aid. Prospects are favourable for the 2006/07 secondary (winter/spring) season cereal crops, mostly wheat and barley, to be harvested from June onwards. Output, as usual, will depend critically on the weather during the main rainy season and the availability of fertilizer and other essential inputs which have remained in short supply in past seasons. As in the past few years, the Republic of Korea has donated 300,000 tons of fertilizer for the next main season.

C. World Food Programme

31. Regarding the food security situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, WFP noted that it had received confirmation from the Government in March 2007 that the 2006/07 food deficit was 1 million tons owing to reduced agricultural production following the 2006 floods. The downward trend of food-aid imports continued in 2007 with only 5 per cent of the annual gap having been covered as of

[11] Crop Prospects and Food Situation No. 3, May 2007, p. 21.

30 May 2007.[12] Developments with regard to the nuclear issue further exacerbated the difficulties in receiving food imports from either bilateral or multilateral sources. Limited access to the field prevented WFP and other international organizations from being able to effectively assess the food security situation and detect specific cases of food shortages. Without sufficient food aid and food imports, food-insecure regions are expected to be affected, with the likelihood of increasing malnutrition rates for vulnerable groups (pregnant and lactating women, children under 5 years of age and those without recourse to substitute means of getting food). These 6-7 million vulnerable people have experienced a second consecutive winter with insufficient food supplies. Furthermore, winter is the time when malnutrition is exacerbated among vulnerable people in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea owing to poor access to food supplies and a reliance on unbalanced diets and deficient in vitamins and minerals. The measles outbreak in February 2007 could be an indicator of the worsening nutritional status. The WFP two-year Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation has a food component of 150,000 tons for 1.9 million beneficiaries. One year into the operation, WFP has received only 22 per cent (US$ 23 million) of its overall requirements and is only able to reach 700,000 of its intended beneficiaries in 30 of the intended 50 counties.

D. United Nations Children's Fund

32. UNICEF reported that children in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are desperately in need of assistance because of acute shortages of food and essential drugs, the degraded quality of water and sanitation systems and the poor quality of care provided in childcare institutions.

33. On 15 February 2007, the Government requested UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO) to provide help in responding to an outbreak of measles. The resultant mass immunization campaign reached 16.2 million people aged 6 months to 45 years and demonstrated the possibilities for effective cooperation with the authorities.

34. In accordance with the policy of "no access, no assistance" implemented by the majority of resident development agencies following the Government's decision to deny access to the 25 counties in the three provinces of Changang, Ryanggang and North Hamgyong, in early May 2007, UNICEF informed the Government that it would no longer support interventions in those provinces (except for immunization and vitamin A programmes which are carried out nationwide), but would reverse its decision if granted access again. UNICEF has joined other United Nations agencies in advocating for access to these provinces as chronic malnutrition rates of children in these areas are among the highest in the country.

35. UNICEF, in close partnership with WHO, provided vaccines, immunization supplies, cold-chain equipment and training to the national immunization programme, which contributed to the improvement of routine immunization. UNICEF provided essential medicines, targeted especially at women and children, to health institutions covering 55 per cent of the country's total population, with the objective of reducing mortality, particularly from diarrhoea and acute respiratory

[12] WFP Operations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — Overview: Food Security Situation, 30 May 2007.

infections. More focus was placed on strengthening women's health, with the formulation of the National Reproductive Health Strategy in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health and concerned partner agencies.

36. The nutritional status of children continued to improve, as reflected in the 2004 nutrition survey conducted by UNICEF jointly with the Government and WFP. At the policy level, a protocol for the treatment of severely malnourished children based on WHO standards was developed and disseminated nationwide. To address maternal malnutrition, protocols on iron folate supplementation before pregnancy and multimicronutrient supplementation during pregnancy were developed, and nationwide supplementation started from 2005. Early childhood care and development were promoted through training on the improvement of practices in care institutions where the growth and development of children are regularly monitored.

37. In 2006 access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation facilities increased in selected communities, childcare institutions, primary schools and hospitals covering a population of around 400,000 people. An additional 5 million people in large urban centres benefited from treated clean water and functioning pumping stations.

38. The Ministry of Education has also requested support from UNICEF in improving the quality of education. In 2006 the learning and teaching environment improved for over 14,000 children through the rehabilitation of school facilities, and such investments are continuing in 2007.

E. United Nations Development Programme

39. The UNDP presence in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea since 1979 has allowed for a more effective international response to the food shortages that the country experienced in the 1990s. Over the past decade UNDP funded roughly $3 million in development activities per year, focusing on food production, rural and environmental sector management, economic management and social sector management.

40. On 1 March 2007, UNDP suspended its operations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. At the request of the Government, UNDP withdrew its remaining international staff members in May 2007. UNDP announced the suspension of its activities, in view of the failure to implement conditions set up following reports that United Nations funds improperly went to the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. A report by the independent United Nations Board of Auditors on UNDP activities in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea found that there has been no large-scale or systematic diversion of United Nations funds provided to support humanitarian relief efforts.

F. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

41. UNESCO reported no substantial changes in terms of legislation on restrictions on the freedoms of thought and expression and on equal access to information. UNESCO noted that serious concerns have been expressed over the

situation of freedom of expression in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by non-governmental organizations.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

42. The present report outlines the limited progress made in implementing the measures set out in previous resolutions of the Commission on Human Rights and the General Assembly on the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the recommendations addressed to the Government by the United Nations special procedures and treaty bodies.

43. The High Commissioner for Human Rights will continue her efforts to engage in a constructive dialogue with the authorities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with a view to establishing technical cooperation programmes in the field of human rights by inviting the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations Office at Geneva for a meeting in 2007 and to work with other United Nations agencies to strengthen the promotion and protection of human rights for all nationals of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

44. The Secretary-General calls upon the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to extend free and full access to United Nations agencies and other humanitarian actors in order for them to be able to carry out their mandates. The Secretary-General is hopeful that through improved cooperation and dialogue, the United Nations will be able to help promote and protect human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.